



Dr. Jamie Hearnese really enjoyed her job as a cancer researcher at Vanderbilt University. She particularly enjoyed one aspect of her career: mentoring high school students.

“It started as a germ of an idea, that I could teach,” Jamie said, “But then I realized I love teaching.”

Her friends and co-workers noticed, too. One friend read an article about **Teach Tennessee** and showed it to Jamie in 2005. After a quick review of the qualifications, Jamie realized it was a perfect fit. She applied, and was accepted.

Jamie couldn’t be happier with her career transition. She now teaches Chemistry and Biology at Blackman High School in Murfreesboro. She relishes the opportunity to combine her love of science with making a positive impact on young people.

“There’s no better place to make a difference than the classroom,” she said. “That’s what it’s all about.”

Jamie explained that her real-world experience helps her connect with her students.

“Kids really perk up when I talk about my previous life,” she said. “They love to hear how what they are learning can be applied in the real world.”

That’s the real power of **Teach Tennessee**: giving qualified, experienced people like Jamie the opportunity to turn their expertise into a rewarding teaching career.

It’s this individualized professional development approach that sets **Teach Tennessee** apart from other programs, Jamie explained. It’s an approach that’s particularly critical during the first three years.

The biggest learning curve comes in finding ways to manage a classroom and guide lessons. It can only be learned from experience, Jamie said.

During a Teach Tennessee fellow’s first year, this experience is guided by a mentor, who spends 30-45 days in the classroom, observing and making recommendations for improvement

She’s now in her third year.

“I’ve found my groove,” she said. “I’ve learned how to deal with issues, and really know what’s going on.”

While the transition has been a challenge, Jamie calls her switch to a teaching career “one of the most rewarding things I have ever done.”